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United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency New England

**Community Update**  
**Durham Meadows Superfund Site**  
**Durham, Connecticut**  
**June 2006**

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## Environmental Field Work Scheduled this Summer

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### Introduction

Early this summer, EPA plans to conduct preliminary design work at the former location of Merriam Manufacturing Company at 281 Main Street in Durham, Connecticut. Later this summer, EPA also plans to install and sample temporary wells at a variety of locations throughout the Durham Meadows Superfund Site in order to investigate potential locations of shallow contaminated groundwater. In the meantime, EPA has sent letters to potentially responsible parties regarding its wish to negotiate for performance and financing of the cleanup remedy for the Site. The September 2005 Record of Decision (ROD) outlines the final cleanup remedy for all areas of the Site, including the Merriam Manufacturing Company Study Area, the Durham Manufacturing Company Study Area, and the overall Site-wide Groundwater Study Area.

Filtering and monitoring of affected residential drinking water wells in the area continues under State order. Currently, Durham Manufacturing Company continues to perform this work at homes in its area. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is performing this work for the homes in the Merriam Manufacturing Company area.

### Work at the Former Location of Merriam Manufacturing Company

EPA's contractor, Metcalf & Eddy (M&E), will conduct additional work at the former location of the Merriam Manufacturing Company this summer to more fully define the nature and extent of contamination on the property. Work will consist primarily of sampling both soil and soil vapor. This work will supplement previous investigative work done on the property, and allow for a better design of the remedy.

**Beginning the week of June 5**, Town residents can expect to see some clearing of brush on site, as well as the return of a field trailer at the front of the property along Main Street just behind the fence. In response

to safety concerns, EPA will also be removing privacy slats from a portion of the fence, in order to allow residents and business tenants leaving the property to have a better line of sight to pedestrians on the sidewalk on Main Street.

**Beginning the week of June 19**, contamination in soils and soil vapor at the MMC Study Area will be better defined by conducting additional sampling. During a soil gas survey, M&E will drill small (less than one-inch) bore holes and analyze soil vapor samples with field equipment. Based on the results of the soil gas survey, M&E will then drill soil borings to collect surface and subsurface soil samples. Most, if not all of the work at this location, will occur behind the existing fence that encircles the front portion of the property.

EPA expects that most of the field investigations on the MMC Study Area will be completed by the end of July. The field trailer will be removed from the area in September 2006.

### EPA to Investigate and Evaluate Shallow Groundwater

Volatile chemicals have been detected in groundwater wells at the Durham Manufacturing Company and the former location of the Merriam Manufacturing Company, as well as in soils or soil gas at one or both company properties. While groundwater throughout the area is contaminated, and a number of private wells have carbon filters installed to remove volatile organic compounds from drinking water, most residential wells in the area are deep, and therefore may not be serving as a pathway for any volatile chemical migration into homes.

"Vapor Intrusion" is the migration of volatile chemicals from the subsurface into overlying buildings. Volatile chemicals in buried wastes and/or contaminated groundwater can emit vapors that may migrate through subsurface soils and into indoor air spaces of overlying buildings in ways similar to that of radon gas seeping into homes. In some cases, the vapors may

accumulate in buildings to levels that may pose a risk of chronic health effects.

In May 2005, EPA sampled indoor air and soil gas at a limited number of homes in the area in order to investigate the potential for vapor intrusion. Overall, most of these results were inconclusive. **Later this summer**, in order to evaluate whether there is any potential risk to indoor air quality, EPA, with input from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEP), plans to investigate the existence of shallow groundwater (up to 30 feet below ground surface) and whether any such shallow groundwater is contaminated to the extent that it may pose a risk to human health. Initial investigations will focus on a limited number of residential homes near the two facilities to determine if further investigation may be needed, and help focus the locations for any such future work. EPA expects that the bulk of the work will occur in the same locations previously sampled, pending agreement from homeowners to allow access to their property.

Based on this and future data, if EPA determines there are unacceptable risks, then further actions will be taken to address such risks, including subslab depressurization systems and institutional controls on vacant properties or portions of properties, in accordance with EPA and CT DEP requirements. Subslab depressurization systems (also called subslab ventilation systems) are common and reliable technologies for mitigation of contaminated soil vapors within existing structures. Institutional controls are legal and administrative tools used to maintain protection of human health and the environment at contaminated properties.

### **Negotiations with Potentially Responsible Parties**

Now that final cleanup remedies have been selected, the next step is to design the cleanup methods and implement the remedies.

It is EPA's strong preference that the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) perform and/or finance the work required at Superfund sites. For most such sites where PRPs have been identified, EPA typically negotiates with the PRPs and endeavors to enter into a legal agreement spelling out exactly what the PRPs are responsible for, whether that is performing the work, or entering into a settlement to finance all or a portion of the work.

In April 2006, EPA sent letters to the PRPs inviting them to participate in formal negotiations with EPA, the United States Department of Justice, and the State of Connecticut in an effort to reach a settlement to conduct or finance the response action at the Durham Meadows Superfund Site. These negotiations will be confidential, but the public will be notified of any final settlements. There will be a public comment period for any settlement involving the performance of work.



***If you have any questions about the Durham Meadows Superfund Site or would like more information, you may call or write:***

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